

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Service Event at Browne Education Campus

January 16, 2012

The President. Well, good morning, everybody!

Audience members. Good morning!

The President. Oh, this looks like an outstanding group. I can already tell. I'm not going to make a long speech because we're here to do some work. But mainly what I want to do is just to say thank you to all of you for participating. I know there are a lot of organizations that are represented here today. We are so glad to be at this outstanding school where we're going to be doing a whole bunch of stuff to make it—make the facilities even better than they already are.

But this is the third year now that Michelle and Malia and usually Sasha is here—she couldn't make it today—that we provide or engage in some sort of service on Dr. King's birthday. And there's no better way to celebrate Dr. King than to do something on behalf of others.

I know there's been a lot of controversy lately about the quote on the memorial, and they're changing it and making some modifications, but if you look at that speech talking about Dr. King as a drum major, what he really said was that all of us can be a drum major for service, all of us can be a drum major for justice. There's nobody who can't serve, nobody who can't help somebody else. And whether you're 7 or 6 or whether you're 76, then you can find opportunities to make an enormous difference in your community. And at a time when the country has been going through some difficult economic times, for us to be able to come together as a community, people from all different walks of life, and make sure that we're giving back, that's ultimately what makes us the strongest, most extraordinary country on Earth, is because we pull together when times are good, but also when times are hard. And you guys all represent that.

So on behalf of our family, we want to say thank you. I'm sure Dr. King, were he here, he'd want to say thank you. And I look forward to spending some time next to you guys. Hopefully, I have some good instructors here so that I don't mess anything up. So if you're putting a paintbrush in my hands, make sure that I've got some very clear lines, and I'll try to stay within them.

All right? Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Browne Education Campus, service event.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

Subjects: District of Columbia : Browne Education Campus; Holidays and special observances : Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday; Voluntarism.

DCPD Number: DCPD201200027.